



# NEWS

From County Supervisor Paul Biane

[www.sbcounty.gov/Biane](http://www.sbcounty.gov/Biane)

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For more information, contact  
Matt Brown, Second District Chief of Staff  
(909) 387-4833  
or  
Terri Williams, Program Manager  
(909) 387-4692

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## **Supervisors Super Size Health Inspection Grades**

SAN BERNARDINO - The Board of Supervisors on Tuesday agreed to super size letter grades San Bernardino County health inspectors issue to restaurants and other food establishments.

Starting in mid-June, the As, Bs and Cs printed on the cards will be 26 percent larger so customers can see the grades more clearly. Requests from patrons and restaurant owners prompted the move.

"Larger letter grades will catch customers' eyes when they eat out, and that will help make more people aware of the county's restaurant grading system," said Second District Supervisor Paul Biane, who introduced the grading ordinance in April 2004.

Before the grading system was enacted, patrons had to ask to see a restaurant's inspection report if they wanted to know how the establishment scored on its last

health inspection. However, Biane and his staff discovered many restaurants would not provide a report.

In addition to increasing the letter size, the Board unanimously agreed to change the name of the cards from "Inspection Summary Reports" to "Letter Grade Cards" and to print the Division of Environmental Health Services Web address on the cards. The Web site - [www.sbcounty.gov/dehs](http://www.sbcounty.gov/dehs) -- lists grades and inspection information for every restaurant in San Bernardino County. The grade site, which has been up for about a year and a half, has received 14.9 million hits.

"The Web site makes it simple for people to check restaurants scores and decide where and where not to eat," Biane said. "This is the obviously the kind of information people want, and the kind of information San Bernardino County is providing."

The grading system offers incentive for restaurant owners to make sure their establishments are free of health code violations. According to Environmental Health Services, 74% of restaurants receive an "A" on the first inspection.

"Every restaurant owner knows their customers want to see an 'A' in their window, so they are trying harder to make the grade," Biane said.

Since the county adopted the ordinance, most cities have adopted rules requiring food establishments in their borders to post grades. However, a handful of cities - San Bernardino, Victorville, Rialto, Needles, Twentynine Palms and Adelanto - have not adopted posting requirements. Restaurants in the six cities receive letter grade cards after inspections, but they are not required to post them.

Letter grades indicate scores issued by health inspectors. "A" equals a grade of 90-100, a "B" is 89 to 80 and a "C" is 79 to 70. Restaurants that receive a "C" are given 30 days to bring the grade up to at least a "B" or the eatery must cease to operate. Establishments that score below a "C" are closed immediately.